

Grassland area by Vicarage Lane in Scaynes Hill – 7 June 2014

There are a few weed species such as nettle, ratstail plantain (*Plantago major*) and wall barley (*Hordeum murinum*) round the edges, but most of the grassland contains species associated with hay meadow vegetation (MG5 in the National Vegetation Classification system) – see list below in which I have starred the species particularly indicating hay meadow grassland.

<i>Achillea millefolium</i> *	Yarrow
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> *	Sweet vernal grass
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	wall barley
<i>Centaurea nigra</i> *	Hardhead
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i> *	Mouse ear chickweed
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i> *	Cocksfoot
<i>Festuca rubra</i> *	red fescue
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	hogweed
<i>Holcus lanatus</i> *	Yorkshire fog
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i> *	catsear
<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i> *	meadow vetchling
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial Rye Grass
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i> *	Common Bird's-foot-trefoil

<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> *	Ribwort plantain
<i>Plantago major</i>	Ratstail plantain
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough meadow grass
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	silver weed
<i>Ranunculus acris</i> *	Meadow buttercup
<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i> *	Bulbous buttercup
<i>Rumex acetosa</i> *	Common sorrel
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Dock
<i>Stellaria graminea</i> *	Lesser stitchwort
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion
<i>Trifolium pratense</i> *	Red clover
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover
<i>Vicia sativa</i> ?	common vetch

Although all these wildflower species are present they are not particularly abundant at the moment and so the area looks grassy rather than full of colourful wildflowers. I don't think the grassland has been managed very sensitively. There is a thick thatch and evidence of rotting cuttings on the surface. This means that the soil fertility will be high leading to the preponderance of ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and rough meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*) which I saw today with only small amounts of sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) which is associated with more species-rich grassland.

I would suggest that you have the basis for a lovely meadow here which would respond well to good management. As soon as the flowers have set seed, I would cut in such a way as to mimic a hay cut (preferably with scythes) and rake up the cuttings and remove. I would then keep the grass short over winter taking care to remove all the cuttings. This should reduce the fertility and create space in the sward for the wildflower seeds to germinate. I would not advise sowing or planting – at least for a year or two – as you have what looks like the remains of an original bit of meadow. It was particularly good to see bulbous buttercup, meadow vetchling and lots of birdsfoot trefoil.

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